



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 6517  
July 16, 2024  
Consent Agenda**

**AGENDA BILL INFORMATION**

<b>TITLE:</b>	AB 6517: Public Works Building Seismic Repairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Appropriate \$987,000 from the ARPA fund and authorize staff to proceed with seismic repairs to Public Works building.	

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	City Manager
<b>STAFF:</b>	Jessi Bon, City Manager Robbie Cunningham Adams, Management Analyst
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	n/a
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. Quantum Consulting Seismic Assessment Letter
<b>CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:</b>	3. Make once-in-a-generation investments to update and modernize aging infrastructure, capital facilities, and parks.

<b>AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE</b>	\$ 987,000
<b>AMOUNT BUDGETED</b>	\$ 0
<b>APPROPRIATION REQUIRED</b>	\$ 987,000

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this agenda bill is to appropriate \$987,000 in ARPA funds and authorize staff to proceed with seismic repairs to the Public Works building.

- While the facilities condition assessment confirmed the functional obsolescence of the existing Public Works building (see [AB 6402](#) and [AB 6477](#)), it remains necessary to operate key components of the facility for approximately five to seven years while a new building and maintenance yard is designed, funding is secured, and a new building is constructed.
- Staff explored the feasibility of fully abandoning the Public Works building now and using alternative facility options until the opening of the new Public Safety and Maintenance (PSM) building.
- Unfortunately, there are no reasonable alternatives to fully abandoning the building, although there are opportunities to scale back building use.
- To reduce further strain on critical building systems, and facilitate faster and less expensive construction of needed seismic repairs, staff are preparing to reduce the number of employees using the Public Works building by half starting this fall.
- Staff recommend making the minimum necessary seismic repairs to keep the Public Works building safely in operation in the short-term (see Exhibit 1).

- Should the Council approve this appropriation and scope of work, the City will complete design work in the coming weeks and go out to bid. Construction is expected to commence this fall and potentially be completed by the end of the year.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Long-Range Facility Planning**

In early 2023, the City began a planning process to complete a Facilities Conditions Assessment for various municipal buildings and to develop a Long-Range Facilities Plan for select City facilities. Northwest Studio was selected as the consultant for this project and is supported by a variety of specialized consultants.

The Long-Range Facility Planning project was intended to be completed in two phases, the first phase focusing on comprehensive Facilities Conditions Assessment (FCAs) for six buildings in 2023: Mercer Island City Hall, the Public Works Building, the Mercer Island Community & Event Center Annex Building, the Luther Burbank Administrative Building, the Mercer Island Thrift Shop, and the former Tully's Building. A second phase will include Facility Conditions Assessments for Fire Station 91, Fire Station 92, and the Mercer Island Community and Event Center.

The purpose of an FCA is to inventory and evaluate building and site infrastructure conditions, document observed deficiencies, and develop a recommended strategy to ensure continuity of services, extend the life of each facility, or alternatively prepare to replace existing assets.

The second phase of facilities planning work included developing a Long-Range Facilities Plan for these six facilities based on assessment and data collected from the FCA process. The Long-Range Planning Work was intended to be completed in 2024 and anticipated an extensive public engagement process. Unfortunately, just as the facilities planning work was kicking off in early 2023, City Hall was closed due to asbestos contamination.

### **Facility Conditions Assessment – Public Works**

Given the age and condition of the Public Works Building, the City Manager directed the staff and consulting teams to proceed with the FCA for this building, while pausing assessment work on the other buildings.

The Public Works building, located behind City Hall, was constructed primarily as a workshop and mechanic facility in 1981. The facility operates under an approved Conditional Use permit originally issued in 1979. The Public Works Building is 15,350 square feet and currently houses the following operational and administrative teams:

- Right-of-Way & Stormwater Team (10 FTEs)
- Water Utility (8.5 FTEs, 3 LTEs)
- Sewer Utility (6.5 FTEs)
- Parks Maintenance (10 FTEs)
- Support Services Team (3 FTEs, 1 LTE)
- Public Works Engineering and Administration Teams (19 FTEs)

Following the closure of City Hall in April 2023, the City's Utility Billing Team was re-located at the Public Works building (3 FTEs). In total, there are 64 employees (FTE and LTE equivalents) and 15 to 20 seasonal employees who currently operate out of this facility. In addition to the primary building, the site also includes the City warehouse and the "yard", which accommodates the storage of City vehicles, large equipment

(plows, sanders, mowers, loaders, backhoes, etc.), small equipment and tools, and construction materials (gravel, pipe, waste, etc.).

At the February 6, 2024 City Council meeting (see [AB 6402](#)), City staff presented initial findings from the FCA and a high-level overview of the potential repairs and investments necessary to keep the Public Works building operational. These include both critical systems repairs and basic safety, efficiency, and comfort-centered upgrades.

At the May 21, 2024 City Council meeting (see [AB 6477](#)), City staff introduced the findings from the Public Works Building Seismic Analysis and provided follow-up on the Public Works Building Facility Conditions Assessment.

## **ISSUE/DISCUSSION**

### **Occupancy of Public Works Building Until Completion of PSM Building**

While the facilities condition assessment confirmed the functional obsolescence of the existing Public Works building, it remains necessary to operate the facility for approximately five to seven years while a new building and yard is designed, funding is secured, and the new PSM building is constructed.

Staff explored the feasibility of fully abandoning the Public Works building now and using alternative facility options until the opening of the new Public Safety and Maintenance (PSM) building. Unfortunately, there are no reasonable alternatives to fully abandoning the building, although there are opportunities to scale back building use.

The Public Works building includes shop and mechanic facilities used to maintain and operate the City's vehicle fleet. City staff determined there is no alternative facility on Mercer Island capable of servicing the entire City fleet. The City fleet includes many large utility vehicles that commercial mechanic shops on Mercer Island cannot service. City emergency response operates 24/7, so City staff need access to shop mechanic services at all hours.

Staff considered temporarily re-locating the shop and mechanic facilities off-island, but determined this would present significant challenges to City operations. Using snow response as an example, the City fleet would continue to be stored in the existing Public Works yard. During an emergency snow event, City trucks would need to be picked up from the existing Public Works yard, moved to the off-island mechanic shop to have a snowplow installed, and then driven back to Mercer Island to begin snow removal operations. The added time and operational complexity would significantly reduce efficiency and impact operations and response times.

While abandoning the Public Works building would remove the need for seismic and other safety repairs, it would require acquiring or leasing additional workspace for displaced staff in addition to leasing an off-island mechanic shop and warehouse. These leased spaces would be necessary until the PSM building is completed. Initial assessments indicate costs to lease these spaces are comparable if not more than keeping the current Public Works building in operation.

On this basis, staff recommends making the minimum necessary seismic and safety repairs to keep the Public Works building in operation in the short-term.

### **Appropriation Needed for Seismic Repairs to Public Works Building**

Staff is requesting the City Council appropriate \$987,000 in ARPA funds and authorize staff to proceed with seismic repairs to the Public Works building.

The City's consultant, Northwest Studio, engaged Quantum Consulting Engineers, a structural engineering firm, to conduct a detailed seismic analysis of the Public Works Building, and to identify specific structural retrofits required for the building. Quantum's recommendations (see Exhibit 1), include the following:

- Completely remove the existing green roof and accumulated soil.
- Fully replace the roof once the green roof and soil are removed, and the retrofits to secure the roof to the walls are completed.
- Install anchoring between the walls and the wood diaphragms at the two higher level roofs (the second-floor office space and high bay garage).
- Install a subsurface concrete-grade beam along the exterior at each end of the high-bay garage doors.
- Retrofit numerous unbraced interior concrete masonry unit walls throughout the building.

### **Reducing Risk of Further Repairs to Existing Public Works Building**

To reduce further strain on critical building systems and facilitate faster and less expensive construction of needed seismic repairs, staff is preparing to reduce the number of employees using the Public Works building by half starting this fall.

There are 64 employees currently using the building and this can be reduced to around 30 staff by moving some employees to the Luther Burbank Administration building, the Reservoir Facility, and the Caretaker's House in Luther Burbank Park.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Should the Council approve this appropriation and scope of work for seismic repairs of the Public Works building, the City will complete design work in the coming weeks and go out to bid. Construction is expected to commence this fall and potentially be completed by the end of the year.

Upon installation of the final police modular building this month, staff will begin reducing the number of staff based in the Public Works building.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Appropriate \$987,000 in ARPA funds and authorize staff to proceed with seismic repairs to Public Works building.